

Firearms

305.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for issuing firearms, the safe and legal carrying of firearms, firearms maintenance and firearms training.

This policy does not apply to issues related to the use of firearms that are addressed in the Use of Force or Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths policies.

This policy only applies to those members who are authorized to carry firearms.

305.1.1 AUTHORIZATION TO CARRY FIREARMS

All licensed personnel shall successfully complete department training regarding the use of force, deadly force and the use of firearms before being issued a firearm or being authorized to carry a firearm in the course of their duties (Minn. Stat. § 626.8452, Subd. 3; Minn. Stat. § 626.8463).

305.2 POLICY

The Mendota Heights Police Department will equip its members with firearms to address the risks posed to the public and department members by violent and sometimes well-armed persons. The Department will ensure firearms are appropriate and in good working order and that relevant training is provided as resources allow.

305.3 AUTHORIZED FIREARMS, AMMUNITION AND OTHER WEAPONS

Members shall only use firearms that are issued or approved by the Department and have been thoroughly inspected by the Range Instructor. Except in an emergency or as directed by a supervisor, no firearm shall be carried by a member who has not qualified with that firearm at an authorized department range.

All other weapons not provided by the Department, including, but not limited to, edged weapons, chemical or electronic weapons, impact weapons or any weapon prohibited or restricted by law or that is not covered elsewhere by department policy, may not be carried by members in the performance of their official duties without the express written authorization of the member's Sergeant. This exclusion does not apply to the carrying of a single folding or fixed blade pocketknife that is not otherwise prohibited by law.

305.3.1 HANDGUNS

The authorized department-issued handgun for patrol use is the Glock 17 (9mm) or Glock 21 (.45). Command staff personnel, officers assigned to investigations and officers in certain supplemental assignments may be issued a Glock 19 (9mm).

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305.3.2 LESS LETHAL SHOTGUNS

The authorized department-issued less lethal shotgun is the Remington 870 with orange stock and fore-grip. When not deployed, the shotgun shall be properly secured consistent with department training in a locking weapons rack in the patrol vehicle.

305.3.3 PATROL RIFLES

The authorized department-issued patrol rifle is the Colt AR-15 .223.

Officers may deploy the patrol rifle in any circumstance where the officer can articulate a reasonable expectation that the rifle may be needed. Examples of some general guidelines for deploying the patrol rifle may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Situations where the officer reasonably anticipates an armed encounter.
- (b) When a officer is faced with a situation that may require accurate and effective fire at long range.
- (c) Situations where a officer reasonably expects the need to meet or exceed a suspect's firepower.
- (d) When a officer reasonably believes that there may be a need to fire on a barricaded person or a person with a hostage.
- (e) When a officer reasonably believes that a suspect may be wearing body armor.
- (f) When authorized or requested by a supervisor.
- (g) When needed to euthanize an animal.

When not deployed, the patrol rifle shall be properly secured consistent with department training in a locking weapons rack in the patrol vehicle.

305.3.4 PERSONALLY OWNED PATROL RIFLES

Members desiring to carry an authorized but personally owned patrol rifle must be in a non-probationary status and receive written approval from the Chief of Police or the authorized designee. Once approved, personally owned patrol rifles are subject to the following restrictions:

- (a) Must be an AR-15/M4 platform from Colt, Smith & Wesson or other approved brand in good condition and comparable with department owned rifles.
- (b) The firearm shall be inspected by a Firearms Instructor prior to being carried and thereafter shall be subject to inspection whenever it is deemed necessary.
- (c) Must be 5.56/.223 caliber with a barrel length of not less than 16 inches. Barrel lengths less than 16 inches fall under the National Firearms Act (NFA) and must be registered with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATFE), officers wishing to use an NFA regulated firearm must have properly registered the firearm and received a tax stamp prior to use. Officers must keep the approved NFA tax stamp with the firearm at all times and copy will be maintained in the officers training folder.
- (d) Must be semi-automatic only.
- (e) Must be equipped with iron sights as the primary or secondary sighting method.

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- (f) If equipped with an optic, the optic must be of high quality suitable for use a law enforcement duty rifle. Examples of acceptable brands include Aimpoint, Trijicon or Vortex.
- (g) Must have either a fixed stock of multi-positional collapsible stock.
- (h) Must be equipped with two 30 round magazines coupled together and loaded with 30 rounds of ammunition. Members must supply their own department approved ammunition.
- (i) Must have an approved single or two-point sling to allow for hands-free retention of the rifle.
- (j) A tactical flashlight, mounted to either the forearm or a vertical grip,
- (k) Members are responsible for securing rifles in a hard sided case and locked in a locker at the end shift.
- (l) If the member takes the rifle to their residence they acknowledge they are responsible securing the rifle IAW all policies and statutes and the department assumes no responsibility.
- (m) The department will not be responsible for the replacement of any part of a personal rifle that is damaged or destroyed in the line of duty.
- (n) Members accept that if the rifle is used in the line of duty it will be entered into evidence and may take up to seven years for it to be returned. The department will not issue a replacement.
- (o) Prior to carrying the firearm, members shall qualify under the supervision of a firearms instructor and thereafter shall qualify in accordance with the department qualification schedule. Members must demonstrate proficiency and safe handling, and that the firearm functions properly.
- (p) Members shall provide written notice of the make, model, color, serial number and caliber of the firearm to the Range Instructor, who will maintain a list of the information.
- (q) The weapon must be able to be secured in the rifle lock in the passenger compartment of department squads and will be secured in the lock while on patrol.

305.3.5 AUTHORIZED SECONDARY HANDGUN

Members desiring to carry department or personally owned secondary handguns are subject to the following restrictions:

- (a) The handgun shall be in good working order and on the department list of approved firearms.
- (b) Only one secondary handgun may be carried at a time.
- (c) The purchase of the handgun and ammunition shall be the responsibility of the member unless the handgun and ammunition are provided by the Department.
- (d) The handgun shall be carried concealed at all times and in such a manner as to prevent unintentional cocking, discharge or loss of physical control.

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- (e) The handgun shall be inspected by the Range Instructor prior to being carried and thereafter shall be subject to inspection whenever it is deemed necessary.
- (f) Ammunition shall be the same as department issue. If the caliber of the handgun is other than department issue, the Chief of Police or the authorized designee shall approve the ammunition.
- (g) Prior to carrying the secondary handgun, members shall qualify under range supervision and thereafter shall qualify in accordance with the department qualification schedule. Members must demonstrate proficiency and safe handling, and that the handgun functions properly.
- (h) Members shall provide written notice of the make, model, color, serial number and caliber of a secondary handgun to the Range Instructor, who will maintain a list of the information.

305.3.6 AUTHORIZED OFF-DUTY FIREARMS

The carrying of firearms by members while off-duty is permitted by the Chief of Police but may be rescinded should circumstances dictate (e.g., administrative leave). Members who choose to carry a firearm while off-duty, based on their authority as peace officers, will be required to meet the following guidelines:

- (a) A personally owned firearm shall be used, carried and inspected in accordance with the Personally Owned Firearms requirements in this policy.
 - 1. The purchase of the personally owned firearm and ammunition shall be the responsibility of the member.
- (b) The firearm shall be carried concealed at all times and in such a manner as to prevent unintentional cocking, discharge or loss of physical control.
- (c) It will be the responsibility of the member to submit the firearm to the Range Instructor for inspection prior to being personally carried. Thereafter the firearm shall be subject to periodic inspection by the Range Instructor.
- (d) Prior to carrying any off-duty firearm, the member shall demonstrate to the Range Instructor that he/she is proficient in handling and firing the firearm and that it will be carried in a safe manner.
- (e) The member will successfully qualify with the firearm prior to it being carried.
- (f) Members shall provide written notice of the make, model, color, serial number and caliber of the firearm to the Range Instructor, who will maintain a list of the information.
- (g) If a member desires to use more than one firearm while off-duty, he/she may do so, as long as all requirements set forth in this policy for each firearm are met.
- (h) Members shall only carry department-authorized ammunition
- (i) When armed, officers shall carry their Mendota Heights Police Department identification cards under circumstances requiring possession of such identification.

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305.3.7 AMMUNITION

Members shall carry only department-authorized ammunition. Members shall be issued fresh duty ammunition in the specified quantity for all department-issued firearms during the member's firearms qualification. Replacements for unserviceable or depleted ammunition issued by the Department shall be dispensed by the Range Instructor when needed, in accordance with established policy.

Members carrying personally owned authorized firearms of a caliber differing from department-issued firearms shall be responsible for obtaining fresh duty ammunition in accordance with the above, at their own expense. Replacements for unserviceable or depleted ammunition issued by the Department shall be dispensed by the Range Instructor when needed, in accordance with established policy.

305.4 EQUIPMENT

Firearms carried on- or off-duty shall be maintained in a clean, serviceable condition. Maintenance and repair of authorized personally owned firearms are the responsibility of the individual member.

305.4.1 REPAIRS OR MODIFICATIONS

Each member shall be responsible for promptly reporting any damage or malfunction of an assigned firearm to a supervisor or the Range Instructor.

Firearms that are the property of the Department or personally owned firearms that are approved for department use may be repaired or modified only by a person who is department-approved and certified as an armorer or gunsmith in the repair of the specific firearm. Such modification or repair must be authorized in advance by the Range Instructor.

Any repairs or modifications to the member's personally owned firearm shall be done at his/her expense and must be approved by the Range Instructor.

305.4.2 HOLSTERS

Only department-approved holsters shall be used and worn by members. Members shall periodically inspect their holsters to make sure they are serviceable and provide the proper security and retention of the handgun.

305.4.3 TACTICAL LIGHTS

Tactical lights may only be installed on a firearm carried on- or off-duty after they have been examined and approved by the Range Instructor. Once the approved tactical lights have been properly installed on any firearm, the member shall qualify with the firearm to ensure proper functionality and sighting of the firearm prior to carrying it.

305.4.4 OPTICS OR LASER SIGHTS

Optics or laser sights may only be installed on a firearm carried on- or off-duty after they have been examined and approved by the Range Instructor. Any approved sight shall only be installed in strict accordance with manufacturer specifications. Once approved sights have been properly

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installed on any firearm, the member shall qualify with the firearm to ensure proper functionality and sighting of the firearm prior to carrying it.

Except in an approved training situation, a member may only sight in on a target when the member would otherwise be justified in pointing a firearm at the target.

305.5 SAFE HANDLING, INSPECTION AND STORAGE

Members shall maintain the highest level of safety when handling firearms and shall consider the following:

- (a) Members shall not unnecessarily display or handle any firearm.
- (b) Members shall be governed by all rules and regulations pertaining to the use of the range and shall obey all orders issued by the Range Instructor. Members shall not dry fire or practice quick draws except as instructed by the Range Instructor or other firearms training staff.
- (c) Members shall not clean, repair, load or unload a firearm anywhere in the Department, except where clearing barrels are present.
- (d) Shotguns or rifles removed from vehicles or the equipment storage room shall be loaded and unloaded in the parking lot and outside of the vehicle, using clearing barrels.
- (e) Members shall not place or store any firearm or other weapon on department premises except where the place of storage is locked. No one shall carry firearms into the jail section or any part thereof when securing or processing an arrestee, but shall place all firearms in a secured location. Members providing access to the jail section to persons from outside agencies are responsible for ensuring firearms are not brought into the jail section.
- (f) Members shall not use any automatic firearm, heavy caliber rifle, gas or other type of chemical weapon or firearm from the armory, except with approval of a supervisor.
- (g) Any firearm authorized by the Department to be carried on- or off-duty that is determined by a member to be malfunctioning or in need of service or repair shall not be carried. It shall be promptly presented to the Department or a Range Instructor approved by the Department for inspection and repair. Any firearm deemed in need of repair or service by the Range Instructor will be immediately removed from service. If the firearm is the member's primary duty firearm, a replacement firearm will be issued to the member until the duty firearm is serviceable.

305.5.1 INSPECTION AND STORAGE

Handguns shall be inspected regularly and upon access or possession by another person. Shotguns and rifles shall be inspected at the beginning of the shift by the member to whom the weapon is issued. The member shall ensure that the firearm is carried in the proper condition and loaded with approved ammunition. Inspection of the shotgun and rifle shall be done while standing outside of the patrol vehicle. All firearms shall be pointed in a safe direction or into clearing barrels.

Personally owned firearms may be safely stored in lockers at the end of the shift. Department-owned firearms shall be stored in the appropriate equipment storage room. Handguns may remain

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loaded if they are secured in an appropriate holster. Shotguns and rifles shall be unloaded in a safe manner outside the building and then stored in the appropriate equipment storage room.

305.5.2 STORAGE AT HOME

Members shall ensure that all firearms and ammunition are locked and secured while in their homes, vehicles or any other area under their control, and in a manner that will keep them inaccessible to children and others who should not have access. Members shall not permit department-issued firearms to be handled by anyone not authorized by the Department to do so. Members should be aware that negligent storage of a firearm could result in civil and criminal liability (Minn. Stat. § 609.666; Minn. Stat. § 609.378).

305.5.3 ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Firearms shall not be carried by any member, either on- or off-duty, who has consumed an amount of an alcoholic beverage, taken any drugs or medication, or has taken any combination thereof that would tend to adversely affect the member's senses or judgment.

305.6 FIREARMS TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

All members who carry a firearm while on-duty are required to successfully complete training quarterly with their duty firearms. In addition to quarterly training, all members will qualify at least annually with their duty firearms (Minn. Stat. § 626.8452). Officers will also receive training on this policy, including the learning objectives as provided by POST, at least annually (Minn. Stat. § 626.8452, Subd. 3).

Members will qualify with off-duty and secondary firearms annually.

Training and qualifications must be on an approved range course.

At least annually, all members carrying a firearm should receive practical training designed to simulate field situations including low-light shooting.

305.6.1 NON-CERTIFICATION OR NON-QUALIFICATION

If any member fails to meet minimum standards for firearms training or qualification for any reason, including injury, illness, duty status or scheduling conflict, that member shall submit a memorandum to his/her immediate supervisor prior to returning to regular duty.

Those who fail to meet minimum standards or qualify on their first shooting attempt shall be provided remedial training and will be subject to the following:

Any officer who fails to qualify will be required to receive additional training from firearms instructors. The additional training will be conducted as soon as practical. The additional training will consist of a review of the firearm as well as the course of fire. At the conclusion of the training session, the officer shall demonstrate proficiency and pass the qualification. If, after the additional training, the officer fails to qualify, the officer will be placed on unpaid leave for a period not to exceed 30 days. The officer is then responsible for obtaining their own training at their own

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expense. The department will continue to provide for the cost of the range instructor only, as reasonably assigned at the discretion of the department. If proficiency is not obtained and the officer fails to qualify after the 30 day period, the officer is subject to dismissal.

305.7 FIREARM DISCHARGE

Except during training or recreational use, any member who discharges a firearm intentionally or unintentionally, on- or off-duty, shall make a verbal report to his/her supervisor as soon as circumstances permit. If the discharge results in injury or death to another person, additional statements and reports shall be made in accordance with the Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths Policy. If a firearm was discharged as a use of force, the involved member shall adhere to the additional reporting requirements set forth in the Use of Force Policy.

In all other cases, written reports shall be made as follows:

- (a) If on-duty at the time of the incident, the member shall file a written report with his/her Sergeant or provide a recorded statement to investigators prior to the end of shift, unless otherwise directed.
- (b) If off-duty at the time of the incident, a written report shall be submitted or recorded statement provided no later than the end of the next regularly scheduled shift, unless otherwise directed by a supervisor.

305.7.1 DESTRUCTION OF ANIMALS

Members are authorized to use firearms to stop an animal in circumstances where the animal reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to human safety and alternative methods are not reasonably available or would likely be ineffective.

In circumstances where there is sufficient advance notice that a potentially dangerous animal may be encountered, department members should develop reasonable contingency plans for dealing with the animal (e.g., fire extinguisher, TASER (TM) device, oleoresin capicum (OC) spray, animal control officer). Nothing in this policy shall prohibit any member from shooting a dangerous animal if circumstances reasonably dictate that a contingency plan has failed or becomes impractical.

305.7.2 INJURED ANIMALS

A member may euthanize an animal that is so badly injured that human compassion requires its removal from further suffering and where other dispositions are impractical.

305.7.3 WARNING AND OTHER SHOTS

Generally, warning shots or shots fired for the purpose of summoning aid are discouraged and may not be discharged unless the member reasonably believes that they appear necessary, effective and reasonably safe.

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305.7.4 REPORTING FIREARMS DISCHARGE

The Chief of Police shall notify the Commissioner of Public Safety within 30 days of an on-duty firearm discharge, except when the discharge is in the course of training or destruction of animals (described in this policy). The notification shall contain information concerning the reason for and circumstances surrounding the discharge (Minn. Stat. § 626.553).

305.8 RANGE INSTRUCTOR DUTIES

The range will be under the exclusive control of the Range Instructor. All members attending will follow the directions of the Range Instructor. The Range Instructor will maintain a roster of all members attending the range and will submit the roster to the Training Sergeant after each range date. Failure of any member to sign in and out with the Range Instructor may result in non-participation or non-qualification.

The range shall remain operational and accessible to department members during hours established by the Department.

The Range Instructor has the responsibility of making periodic inspection, at least once a year, of all duty firearms carried by members of this department to verify proper operation. The Range Instructor has the authority to deem any department-issued or privately owned firearm unfit for service. The member will be responsible for all repairs to his/her personally owned firearm; it will not be returned to service until inspected and approved by the Range Instructor.

The Range Instructor has the responsibility for ensuring each member meets the minimum requirements during training shoots and, on at least a yearly basis, can demonstrate proficiency in the care, cleaning and safety of all firearms the member is authorized to carry.

The Range Instructor shall complete and submit to the Training Sergeant documentation of the courses provided. Documentation shall include the qualifications of each instructor who provides the training, a description of the training provided and, on a form that has been approved by the Department, a list of each member who completes the training. The Range Instructor should keep accurate records of all training shoots, qualifications, repairs, maintenance or other records as directed by the Training Sergeant.

305.9 FLYING WHILE ARMED

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has imposed rules governing law enforcement officers flying armed on commercial aircraft. The following requirements apply to personnel who intend to be armed while flying on a commercial air carrier or flights where screening is conducted (49 CFR 1544.219):

- (a) Officers wishing to fly while armed must be flying in an official capacity, not for vacation or pleasure and must have a need to have the firearm accessible, as determined by the Department based on the law and published TSA rules.
- (b) Officers must carry their Mendota Heights Police Department identification card, bearing the officer's name, a full-face photograph, identification

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number, the officer's signature and the signature of the Chief of Police or the official seal of the Department and must present this identification to airline officials when requested. The officer should also carry the standard photo identification needed for passenger screening by airline and TSA officials (e.g., driver's license, passport).

- (c) The Mendota Heights Police Department must submit a National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS) message prior to the officer's travel. If approved, TSA will send the Mendota Heights Police Department an NLETS message containing a unique alphanumeric identifier. The officer must present the message on the day of travel to airport personnel as authorization to travel while armed.
- (d) An official letter signed by the Chief of Police authorizing armed travel may also accompany the officer. The letter should outline the officer's need to fly armed, detail his/her itinerary and include that the officer has completed the mandatory TSA training for a law enforcement officer flying while armed.
- (e) Officers must have completed the mandated TSA security training covering officers flying while armed. The training shall be given by the department-appointed instructor.
- (f) It is the officer's responsibility to notify the air carrier in advance of the intended armed travel. This notification can be accomplished by early check-in at the carrier's check-in counter.
- (g) Any officer flying while armed should discreetly contact the flight crew prior to take-off and notify them of his/her assigned seat.
- (h) Discretion must be used to avoid alarming passengers or crew by displaying a firearm. The officer must keep the firearm concealed on his/her person at all times. Firearms are not permitted in carry-on luggage and may not be stored in an overhead compartment.
- (i) Officers should resolve any problems associated with flying armed through the flight captain, ground security manager, TSA representative or other management representative of the air carrier.
- (j) Officers shall not consume alcoholic beverages while aboard an aircraft, or within eight hours prior to boarding an aircraft.

305.10 CARRYING FIREARMS OUT OF STATE

Qualified, active, full-time officers of this department are authorized to carry a concealed firearm in all other states subject to the following conditions (18 USC § 926B):

- (a) The officer shall carry his/her Mendota Heights Police Department identification card whenever carrying such weapon.
- (b) The officer is not the subject of any current disciplinary action.

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- (c) The officer may not be under the influence of alcohol or any other intoxicating or hallucinatory drug.
- (d) The officer will remain subject to this and all other department policies (including qualifying and training).

Officers are cautioned that individual states may enact local regulations that permit private persons or entities to prohibit or restrict the possession of concealed firearms on their property, or that prohibit or restrict the possession of firearms on any state or local government property, installation, building, base or park. Federal authority may not shield an officer from arrest and prosecution in such locally restricted areas.

Active law enforcement officers from other states are subject to all requirements set forth in 18 USC § 926B.